



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

Just because the undesirable features of the love of recognition are brought out where it is inordinate and conscious of its own relative inability as compared to that of rivals, it is clear that in order to secure desirable results, ability must be improved, ambition curbed and judgment developed as to what is really worthy and therefore worth while. In the language of Lao-tse, we must "weaken ambition" and "strengthen backbone." If we do that we can have some assurance that our efforts will be instrumental in bringing about a life absorbed in service to those higher interests worthy of the dignity of man's estate, instead of a life devoted to a fruitless chase after the elusive rainbow of evanescent fame.

For what are men, who grasp at praise sublime,  
But bubbles on the rapid stream of time,  
That rise and fall, that swell, and are no more,  
Born and forgot, ten thousand in an hour.—*Young*.

H. H. SCHROEDER.

STATE NORMAL SCHOOL, WHITEWATER, WISCONSIN.

---

## THE MORALS OF AN IMMORALIST—FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE.

ALFRED W. BENN.

### II.

IT has been disputed whether Nietzsche's superman was intended by his prophet to stand for a new animal species, or for a new and improved variety of human being, or, finally, for a sporadic type of individual excellence, cropping up occasionally in the existing state of civilization. So far as the name and notion have become popular it seems to be generally understood in the last sense. The superman is commonly identified with a coxcomb whose opinion of his own superiority to the rest of the species

is only equaled by his contempt for the ordinary obligations of morality. Such pretensions are not new; and it would be strange if Nietzsche had no higher ambition than to reëdit them under a more pompous appellation. In fact it very much disgusted him to find that the watchword of his philosophy should be used to procure admittance for degenerate types with whom he sympathized even less than with the unregenerate Philistine. Nothing like the superman had ever turned up in his own experience; whether history had offered any examples of his ideal remains doubtful. On this point the language of Zarathustra is perfectly explicit, and if taken alone would settle the question. When the greatest and the smallest are stripped and compared they show themselves too fatally alike, and both of them all too human. In a later work Napoleon seems to be mentioned as an exception, but an exception that proves the rule, being a combination of the superman with the brute (*WW.*, VI, p. 134, and VII, p. 337).

Napoleon, in fact, embodied the formidable alternative confronting us at the present day. The human race represents a transitional stage of unstable equilibrium. We must either go back to the brute or on to the superman (*WW.*, XII, p. 210). And the choice is not doubtful. Our very first article of faith is the duty of not relapsing into a savage and anti-social state (*WW.*, VII, p. 52). Therefore the new beings can only be conceived as a multitude; goodness can only be developed among equals (p. 210).

It remains to be decided whether we are to conceive the superman as a new animal species, differing not less from the actual human species than that differs from the anthropoid ape, or merely as a new race, related to the modern European somewhat as the Greeks were related to the barbarians among whom they settled. This seems to be a point on which, as on various others, our prophet had no scruple about changing his mind without caring to acknowledge the change either to others or to himself.

To my mind at least, there cannot be the faintest doubt that when he wrote *Zarathustra* his wish was to represent the superman as a new animal species to be evolved by artificial selection from man. I know that his sister and biographer, Madame Förster-Nietzsche, refuses to accept this interpretation; but it is significant that she can only get rid of the relevant texts by explaining them away as poetical metaphors. But when Nietzsche talks in parables he makes them unmistakably parabolical. We find ourselves among a motley assemblage of rope-dancers, lions, adders, tarantulas, kings, beggars and other mystical properties needless to enumerate. But every now and then this rather wearisome entertainment is relieved by the expression of plain ideas in plain language, quite familiar to us from their recurrence in the author's other works where, as Cassandra says, the oracle looks out not like a bride behind her veil, but like wind-driven waves against a rising sun. And foremost among these is the idea of a new species, a superman to be evolved from man, or in the still more telling phrase once let fall, a super-race from the race (*WW.*, VI, p. 111).

We have not now to discuss the feasibility of the idea. What has to be pointed out as the most interesting and attractive element in the work where it first appeared is the fire of moral enthusiasm burning through it from beginning to end. "Zarathustra has found no greater power on earth than good and evil" (p. 84). But as yet this power has been wasted because it was not directed toward the attainment of a single end. "There have been a thousand aims because there have been a thousand peoples. Humanity is still without an aim. And to be without that is to be without itself" (p. 87).

That men should combine for one end is not hopeless, for they already combine in smaller groups. "Regard for the interest of the herd or the community is older than self-interest. The individual is a most recent creation. So long as a good conscience represents the herd only the bad conscience says, 'I.' Truly the sly and

loveless self that seeks its profit in the profit of others is not the beginning but the end of the herd" (p. 86).

At no time of life did his Hellenism make Nietzsche an admirer of the modern state; and at this period he positively foams at the mouth with hatred for it. The people and the herd may be fit objects of faith and love; never the state, although it impudently claims to be the people, which is not deceived but hates it as "a sin against morals and rights." There are many languages of good and evil, but it lies in them all. "All that it says is a lie, and all that it possesses has been stolen." Even those who vanquished the old god fall a prey to the snares of the new idol that promises to give them all if they will worship it; "so it buys the splendor of your virtue and the gaze of your proud eyes." The state must cease to exist before real manhood can begin; much more, before the way to the superman can be prepared (pp. 69-72).

What is the justification of this violent language? We may assume that the state discourages the growth of individuality; and as, according to Zarathustra, it was invented for the benefit of the "superfluous classes," it is apparently made responsible for their continued existence, while they in turn naturally support it.

Evidently, however, what Nietzsche most dreads and detests is not the mischief done by the modern state in suppressing individualism and favoring the survival of degenerates, but the fact that as a real, living, visible, attractive unity it enters into formidable competition with the glorified individuality of his imaginary superman. Michelet has pointed out that the giant Gargantua was nothing less than the new monarchy of the Renaissance; and one has only to think of him as coming into conflict with Cæsar Borgia, whom Nietzsche regards as the highest individual product of that age, to see which party would win. And after all the Duke of Valentinois, like another and greater Cæsar, was, from his German admirers' point of view, a traitor to the individualistic

cause, the ambition of his life having been to establish the new monarchy in the pontifical states, if not, as Machiavelli hoped, over the whole of a reunited Italy. Neither he nor Alcibiades nor any other of the same class has ever been content to "exist beautifully," nor do they seem inclined to tolerate the existence of any other such paragons by their side.

Here then, at first starting, we find the idea of the superman afflicted with an immanent self-contradiction in the best Hegelian style. Conceived as individual, he at once establishes a leveling despotism, thus sublating the very type that he represents. Conceived as a class, he perishes by internecine strife.<sup>1</sup>

Close behind it comes a second self-contradiction afflicting the means proposed, or rather suggested, for bringing the ideal into existence. As already mentioned, they consist in an appeal to moral motives, in the proposal to create a new enthusiasm of humanity, uniting all the tremendous forces that now work for a multitude of conflicting ends toward a single end. Now this demand assumes the existence in the human race, as a whole, of such passionate self-devotion, combined with such cool, unerring judgment, as no example of has been found in the past. For it must be a devotion capable of sacrificing every other end to the achievement of this one end—an end, too, of which as yet there has been no experience, and an end involving, as no other thing sought after has ever involved, the total disappearance of the race that has brought it about. And the judgment called into play for that purpose must find the means for evolving a new animal species, a task to which human ingenuity, operating on the most passive and plastic materials, has never yet found itself equal. Surely a race so splendidly endowed with the noblest capacities of heart and will as to answer Zarathustra's call would de-

---

<sup>1</sup>The condottieri whom Cæsar Borgia treacherously massacred at Sinigaglia were "higher men" of a sort, though not so high as he was.

serve a better fate than such self-annulment, would itself have anticipated the superman, and would require all the running it could make to keep in the same place.

It so happens that we can lay our finger on the initial error whence these monstrous consequences arose. Much as Nietzsche hated Germany, he hated England more; and with the rather discreditable object, I fear, of depreciating England and her great naturalist, he tries to show that without Hegel there would have been no Darwin. For, according to him, the German philosopher, by teaching that specific notions were evolved out of one another, prepared the scientific intellect of Europe to entertain the idea of organic development (*WW.*, V, p. 300). Historically there is, of course, no foundation for such a claim. Evolutionism was hereditary in the Darwin family, and goes back to a time before Hegel; while Hegel himself took the idea of development from Schelling, who in turn owed it to the naturalists of his time. What I wish to point out, however, is not the historical error, but the profound misconception of organic evolution that it betrays. Hegel's theory of logical development is determined by the idea that the lower notion suffers from an inherent self-contradiction, in consequence of which it falls to pieces, and spontaneously gives birth to the higher notion. With Darwin, on the contrary, the decay and death of the old species are not the antecedent, but the consequence of its having given birth to the new species, with which it is unable to compete. And this very internecine strife is another point of distinction between the two processes. Hegel's notions only perish in an ideal sense. In the actual life of logic they survive and continue to play a useful part in the economy of thought.

Applying the result to Nietzsche's philosophy we now see how, under an illusive show of Darwinian biology, he really evolves superman from man on the lines of Hegelian dialectic. That is to say, the old human species

in awakening to the consciousness of its degeneracy overcomes and supersedes itself, thus calling the new super-human species into being. Thus the pessimism of his youth becomes unexpectedly justified as an ideal expression of race suicide preparatory to a better state of things.

I have said that Nietzsche hated England; and it may be thought that this is inconsistent with the praises he lavished on her in his second or scientific period. But the revulsion merely repeats in a much less excusable form his earlier revolt from Wagner and Schopenhauer. It belongs to an unpleasant habit he had of kicking down the ladder by which he had climbed up. He could not forgive the English thinkers for what he owed them; and the "profound mediocrity of the English intellect"—represented presumably by Shakespeare, Newton, Chatham and Byron—is charged with having caused a deep depression of the European intellect as a whole, and more particularly of the French intellect. This very mediocrity, however, enables the English to perform important services for which men of genius are incapacitated by their splendid disregard of facts. Darwin, Mill and Herbert Spencer, being the men to whom he personally owed most, are particularly mentioned in this connection as examples of useful dullness (*WW.*, VII, p. 223). Of the three Spencer seems to have had the largest share in ultimately determining his philosophy, and so he is never mentioned without some expression of contemptuous disagreement. English utilitarianism is the foundation of his ethics; and therefore it is savagely denounced as a canting, hypocritical attempt to secure the greatest happiness of England under pretense of pursuing the greatest happiness of all. In England itself the standard of happiness among moral philosophers is comfort, fashion and a seat in Parliament (*Ib.*, p. 184). Gyzicky once congratulated a German critic for having performed the rare feat of attacking utilitarianism without forgetting the manners of a gentleman. This ad-



mirable exception could not have been our aristocratic immoralist.

Throughout his second period Nietzsche, besides being a utilitarian in the wide sense of judging actions by their consequences, had also been a hedonist, that is, he had considered happiness (or pleasure) as a universally desired and absolutely desirable thing, although at the same time as a thing too indefinite to be made a standard for the unification of human life. The desire of domination, on the other hand, is mentioned in a note bearing the date of 1880 as a symptom of weakness (*WW.*, XI, p. 405). Within a year we find the first intimation of his final doctrine, that power is the *summum bonum* and love of power the universal motive, in an aphorism setting forth (for the rest without an attempt to demonstrate it) that whether we give pleasure or pain to others, it is solely for the purpose of satisfying our love of power (*WW.*, V, p. 50 *seq.*). A little later still, Zarathustra proclaims power as a new virtue, a new standard of good and evil (*WW.*, VI, p. 112). It is not so very new, being borrowed, as usual without acknowledgment, from an English philosopher, Hobbes; and besides that, Nietzsche, in his later writings, especially in the uncompleted *Wille zur Macht*, assumes that power is what everyone really wants and has always wanted. Everyone, with a single striking exception. "Men do not strive for happiness—only Englishmen" (*WW.*, VIII, p. 62); though elsewhere our people are associated in this contemptible pursuit with "shopkeepers, Christians, cows, women and other democrats" (*Ib.*, p. 149). Nevertheless "every healthy morality is controlled by an instinct of life" (*Ib.*, p. 88); "the proof of an action imposed by the vital instinct is the pleasure it gives" (*Ib.*, p. 226); "everything good is instinctive, and therefore easy, necessary, free" (*Ib.*, p. 93); "pleasure is a feeling of power; to exclude the emotions is to exclude those conditions which give the feeling of power, and therefore of pleasure at its highest" (*W. z. M.*, p. 240). Herbert

Spencer would not have dissented in principle from this statement; but then he would not, like his critic, have distinguished between happiness and pleasure, which two other Englishmen, Wordsworth and Ruskin, would have identified with "vital feelings of delight." Can Nietzsche have been ignorant that the gospel of health, with its accompanying condemnation of the sickly and helpless, had been preached before him in *The Data of Ethics*?

On the other hand, Spencer would have emphatically dissented from such a statement as that "egoism belongs to the essence of the distinguished soul; I mean the immovable belief that other beings must be naturally subject to a being like us, and have to sacrifice themselves to it, regarding this relationship as founded on the primary law of things" (*WW.*, VII, pp. 251-52). Nor would he have allowed that the conquest and spoliation of the weaker by the stronger was the very principle of society and of life itself (*Ib.*, p. 238). But he might have fairly challenged the Prussian philosopher to reconcile these crudities with the admonition given elsewhere: "Learn betimes to discard the supposed individual; to discover the errors of the ego; to feel cosmically about the me and thee" (*WW.*, XII, p. 74). Or again, why should Zarathustra compare unfavorably the vulgar who want to live *gratis* with men like himself, who are always thinking what they can give best in exchange for the life they have received, and who condemn the wish to enjoy without giving enjoyment in return? (*WW.*, VI, pp. 291 *seq.*)

Among his other adventures, Zarathustra falls in with an imbecile hedonistic moralist, who is accosting a herd of kine with the object of inducing them to disclose the secret of their happiness (*Ib.*, pp. 389 *seq.*). It does not seem to have struck the prophet that these cows had a logic as well as an ethic, or that, if the pasturing animals were too gentle to toss him on the horns of a dilemma, a savage bull might have been invited in for the purpose. If self-interest is the law of life, with what right can the

present generation be called on to sacrifice themselves for the evolution of a superior race? If there is a moral law prescribing self-devotion, how can it be our duty to create what the highest of our contemporaries would call a devil (*WW.*, VI, p. 213)?

If Nietzsche ever contemplated the idea of evolving a higher animal species than man, he soon gave it up. His last work, *The Anti-Christian*, puts the problem quite clearly, as, not "what is to succeed man?" but—"what kind of man ought to be desired and bred as the more valuable, the more worthy of life, the more certain of a future?" And he proceeds to state, in direct contradiction to Zarathustra, that the desirable type has often presented itself in history, but never as the result of a conscious effort, while the effect of prevalent opinions has long been to repress or extinguish it. Two agencies in particular have hitherto worked with fatal effect in this direction, morality and Christianity. He therefore applied himself with a holy zeal to the destruction of both, his intellect being indeed much better fitted for the work of pulling down than for the work of building up.

The attack on morality, by which is meant the doctrine of universal benevolence, proceeds on the lines of the historical method, and rests on the false assumption that a belief is refuted by showing how it came to exist. Such a method, were it generally applied, would ruin every belief without exception, as all beliefs have a history, and even the skepticism that displaced them would share their fate. As it happens, however, the historical explanation offered of the current distinction between good and evil in conduct is entirely false. It is the work of a mere classical philologist, and a very imperfectly informed one at that. His thesis is that the valuations of character and action were originally fixed by the ruling caste in society, those qualities of health, strength, beauty, courage, liberality and truthfulness which were most conspicuous in its members being approved of, while the distinguishing qualities of their serfs were proportion-

ately despised. In those right-minded ages to be strong and successful was the great merit, to be weak and a failure the great vice. As the subject classes had become enslaved through their weakness, they set up a rival scale of values in which pity, the correlative and consolation of weakness, occupied the highest place, while the virtues of their betters were disparaged, their rightful claims on the laborers treated as wicked spoliation, and their favored position viewed with vindictive envy.

The aristocratic and chivalrous virtues maintain their ascendancy in a chronic state of war by which they are at once originated and preserved. Prolonged peace, on the other hand, creates a fatal split in the ruling body, and undermines its ideals by favoring the development of a priesthood, and enabling it to share the supremacy with the warrior caste. For a priestly life, being conducive to physical degeneracy, breeds all the mental characteristics of a weak race, and therefore throws the priests out of sympathy with the warriors, and makes them the natural allies of the servile herd whose scale of values they adopt and systematize into a code.

It would seem that, according to Nietzsche's reading of history, which is nowhere given as a connected whole, the first essay toward organizing a servile or gregarious ethic was made in Greece by Socrates, himself a man of the people, and afflicted with the characteristic vices of his class, one of these being a morbid disposition to substitute self-conscious reasoning for instinct. Under his corrupting influence Plato, an aristocrat of genius, but born with the soul of a Semitic priest, proceeded to work out a theory of values based on supernatural sanctions in which the right of the stronger, vigorously but vainly defended by those genuine champions of old Hellenic ideals, the sophists, is subordinated to the interest of the masses; a pestilent doctrine which in company with an equally morbid asceticism became more or less current in all the later schools of Greek philosophy.

More, however, was needed than a false philosophy to

secure the final victory of servile over seigneurial values. The Jews, a race of slaves and priests combined, managed to impose their degrading morality on the civilized world by appealing to the instincts of the lowest classes in the Roman Empire under the name of Christianity. This must not be confounded with the genuine teaching of Jesus, a religion in which supernaturalism had no place, and which died with him on Calvary. What carried all before it was Paul's theology, in which the idyllic domestic morality of the Jewish Diaspora is artfully combined with a scheme for giving envious plebeians their revenge on the rich in another world.

In modern times Christianity has transmitted its *moralin* virus to utilitarianism—an essentially gregarious ethical system, first founded by the sickly Jewish artisan Spinoza, and further developed by the plebeian English race, of which Buckle, with his cheap and noisy eloquence, is a characteristic type. For, let there be no mistake about it, what we call “modern ideas” do not come from the essentially aristocratic French people, but from the plebeian English (*WW.*, VII, pp. 224 and 307).

As we learn from his letters, Nietzsche was in early youth a careful student of Theognis (*Briefe*, I, p. 2); and his theory of the two moralities, servile and seigneurial, or gregarious and egregious (taking the second word in its Latin or Italian sense), seems to have been suggested, in the first instance, by that aristocratic elegist's bitter complaint of the change in language brought about by the democratic revolution in Megara. An improvement in their condition has turned the ignorant rustics from bad to good; while reverses of fortune have given an evil name to the quondam nobles. In reference to these passages Welcker, quoted by Grote, observes that the political, as distinguished from the ethical, sense of good and bad fell into desuetude through the influence of the Socratic philosophy, which, according to the same authority, first popularized those terms as ethical qualifications (*Grote's History of Greece*, II, pp. 419 *seq.*).

However this may be, there is no evidence that the personal revaluation brought a change of moral values in its train, nor that either then or afterwards a change in the relative estimate of the different virtues took place. Least of all does it appear that either pity or vindictiveness was a peculiar characteristic of the lower orders. Theognis is thirsting to drink the blood of his enemies; and he particularly reproaches his young favorite Cynos for not grieving long over the sufferings of his friends. Indeed, Homer alone would prove that tenderness and sympathy were qualities highly valued among the best-born Greeks; while the oath taken by every member of an oligarchic club during the revolutionary period, "to do the Demos all the harm he could," is evidence that resentment flourished to the full as much among the hawks as among the lambs.

It would be more true to say that different classes have different and contrasted vices, than that they have different and contrasted virtues—or values, if the latter term be preferred. And we may admit that insolence and cruelty are more characteristic of a ruling, meanness and mendacity of a servile class, while contending that the permanent public opinion of both classes makes for the consecration of courage and gentleness all round. Indeed, the very word "gentleness" is a historical lesson in itself, proving that English aristocratic society, at least, discerned a peculiar connection between sweet manners and good birth.

As a young professor at Basel, Nietzsche fully accepted Grote's vindication of the Sophists, although he failed to see that a far better case than Grote's might be made out for them as ethical reformers. In his latest phase he peremptorily, and without reason given, goes back on the old view, glorifying them as apostles of brute force (*cf. WW.*, X, p. 129, with *W. z. M.*, p. 235). In this connection also he accepts the Melian Dialogue—that masterpiece of tragic irony—as an expression of what Thucydides himself thought about public morality.

There is no direct reference to Plato's *Gorgias*—a wise abstinence; for perhaps it would have involved him in the necessity of finding an answer to the unanswerable Socratic argument against Callicles, the real author of Nietzsche's distinction between gregarious and egregious morality. For, after appealing to natural law in justification of the claim put forward by the superior man to subjugate and despoil the inferior, this cynical aristocrat has to admit that the many, by banding together, may and do gain the upper hand so decisively as to impose their standards on him. Callicles tries to get out of the difficulty by falling back on qualitative distinctions as constituting the right to rule; but this admission re-admits moral values into the discussion, with the result that their supremacy over the whole of life has to be conceded.

Such is also the outcome of Nietzsche's efforts to get beyond good and evil. His objections to the received morality can only be accredited by an appeal to moral considerations of a still higher order. His polemic against pity for degenerates derives its whole strength from the argument that their survival and propagation impairs the life-enhancing qualities of the race. But if anyone chooses to say, "What do I care for the race?" his principles leave him without any answer, but a torrent of unconciliatory abuse.

In so far as popular religion is identified with popular morality, the attack on Christianity lays itself open to the same objection. Nor is that all. What gives such luster to the whole argument and raises it as literature to the first rank among the author's writings, is the moral passion displayed throughout; the constant invoking of truth as a precious thing violated by the Jewish and Christian priesthoods at every step in the propagation of their creed.

Whether his charges have or have not been made out is a question irrelevant to the present discussion. What interests us to observe is that at any rate it did not lie

in the mouth of a professed immoralist to make them. For they involve the assumption, to which he is not entitled, that there is such a thing as moral obligation, and that part of it is to speak the truth. Nietzsche had some glimmering of the difficulty; but he never worked out a consistent theory of the subject, and his language when he touches on it is still more illogical than elsewhere. Even before the days of Zarathustra, some of his reasonings would have discredited a conservative speaker opposing Bradlaugh's claim to be sworn. "Our whole European morality falls to pieces with the death of God. Now, in disclaiming the will to deceive, we stand on moral principle. But supposing, as seems very probable, that all life rests on a basis of deception—what then? Would it not be Quixotic, and even worse, to insist on veracity? Let there be no mistake about it; what fires us still, unbelievers and all, is the old Christian belief, which was also Plato's belief, that God is the truth, that truth is divine. How then if this should seem every day more incredible, if God himself should prove to be our oldest lie?" (*WW.*, V, pp. 271-276.)

At this rate, philosophers, whose business it is to investigate truth, might be expected to receive the news of their only guarantor's death with some dismay. On the contrary, they show an exultation which, in the circumstances, strikes one as rather indecent. "Our whole heart overflows with gratitude, wonder and hopeful expectation" (*Ib.*, p. 272). Zarathustra is one of this jubilant band; but then he sees no connection between theism and intellectual honesty (*Redlichkeit*); on the contrary, he describes the latter as the latest born among the virtues, and hated, as knowledge also is hated, by those who have God on the brain. "Good," or what we call "goody," people "never tell the truth" (*WW.*, VI, pp. 44 and 293). A note dating from the same period suggests the rather awkward compromise that we should have no conscience in respect to truth and error, in order that we may be able again to spend life in the service



of truth and of the intellectual conscience (*WW.*, XII, p. 63).

In the mass of notes collected for what was to have been his *magnum opus*, the *Wille zur Macht*, an untranslatable title which we may approximately render by *The Will to be Strong*, Nietzsche nearly anticipates pragmatism. Indeed, it might seem to be completely anticipated in such sayings as that "truth is what exalts the human type" (p. 153); "perhaps the categories of reason express nothing more than a definite advantage for the race or the species: their utility is their truth" (p. 274 *seq.*); "our confidence in reason and its categories only proves that their utility for life has been shown by experience, not that they are 'true' " (*Leben*, II, p. 775), were they not balanced by other passages of a distinctly intellectualist type, such as the assertion that "it is absolute want of intellectual honesty to estimate a belief by how it works, not by its truth" (*W. z. M.*, p. 120); "intellectual honesty is the result of delicacy, valor, foresight, temperance, practiced and accumulated through a long series of generations" (*Ib.*, p. 245); [with Christianity] "the question is not whether a thing is true, but how it works—which is an absolute want of intellectual honesty" (*Leben*, II, p. 719).

On the whole, it would seem as if this extreme regard for veracity were only used as a means for discrediting religion, morality and the Socratic philosophy. And their defenders might plausibly allege that they only used deception—when they used it—for a good end; that is to say, for an augmentation of vital power. "Everything for the army," as Colonel Henry said. It would have been more consistent, not to say honest, on the part of Nietzsche had he attacked the popular creed simply on the ground that it lowered the vitality of the species. Even on so narrow a basis the attack could not have been worked without an appeal to disinterested motives; in other words, without an appeal to morality. For a selfish religionist might well prefer the gratification of his

mystical cravings, and a priest his ambition, to the health of the race. But here also our critic has thrown away his whole case by two most serious admissions. We have first a frank acknowledgment that "there is nothing diseased about the gregarious human being as such; on the contrary, he is of inestimable value, but incapable of self-guidance, and therefore in need of a shepherd, a need perfectly understood by priests" (*W. z. M.*). "Petty virtues are good for petty people" (*WW.*, VI, p. 246); and when the lower strata of the population are decadent "a religion of self-suppression, patience and mutual help may be of the highest value" (*Leben*, II, p. 734). Therefore "we require that gregarious morality should be held absolutely sacred" (*Ib.*, p. 809). And, secondly, we find a parallel acknowledgment that Christianity deserves great praise as "the genuine religion of the herd" (*WW.*, XIV, p. 336). "The continued existence of the Christian ideal is most desirable. My object in making war on that chlorotic ideal was not to destroy it, but to put an end to its tyranny, and to make room for new and robuster ideals" (*Leben*, II, p. 744). "Common people are only endurable when they are pious" (*WW.*, XII, p. 206). They are not likely to remain pious long where books like *The Anti-Christian* circulate freely.

In England we have had a good supply of those "robuster ideals," for which the German moralist wishes to find room; nor, by all accounts, are they wanting in America; yet he does not seem to have looked to either country for his models. His enormous self-esteem would have suffered by such a reference. It also affected his conception of the superman, who in Nietzsche's last writings no longer figures as a new species, destined to succeed and displace the human species, but rather as a superior race, like the Greeks. At first supermen are thought of not as ruling over the inferior race, but as living apart from them, "like the gods of Epicurus" (*WW.*, XII, p. 211). But this view was soon seen to be

impracticable, and abandoned. Throughout the *Wille zur Macht* nothing is contemplated but a new aristocracy, a ruling race, whose sole business will be to rule, offering splendid examples of beauty, strength and intelligence for the delectation of themselves and of the lower orders. Owing, presumably, to their wise administration, the laborers are to live as the middle class live now; but the higher caste above them will be distinguished for its abstinence (*Ib.*, p. 214). This *élite* naturally falls into two divisions; a small body of supremely intellectual men, performing the highest functions and leading the most perfect life, and, below them, an executive of soldiers and judges to relieve them of the rough work of government; while men of science and the majority of artists will find their appropriate place among the laboring classes (*WW.*, VIII, pp. 302 *seq.*).

It has been mentioned how dependent Nietzsche was on the English moralists in his positivist period, and under what studied rudeness his sense of obligation was concealed. In his last period the debt to Plato is even more obvious, and his resentment is conveyed in the same way, only, as befits the occasion, with extraordinarily virulent abuse. Plato is "a great Cagliostro," an example of "the higher swindling," "a moral fanatic," a "poisoner of heathen innocence," and, worst of all, "tedious" (*W. z. M.*, pp. 234 and 244; *WW.*, VIII, p. 168).

It might be asked how a race of born rulers can be called into existence by suspending all the laws of morality; whether the duties of government are likely to be better performed by an aristocracy permanently emancipated from every social obligation; and finally, whether these "dragon warriors from Cadmean teeth" are likely to keep the peace with each other longer than their fabled prototypes. But the *Wille zur Macht* opens a question of more practical importance for Nietzsche's philosophy than these. The theory adumbrated in that unfinished work seems to be that nature consists of nothing but energy; that the natural process consists in the appro-

priation of energy by one body at the expense of another; that the ascending line of organic development is determined by a continual gain, and the descending line by a continual loss, of energy; that, in so far as we can use such expressions as right and wrong, the right morality consists in preferring the qualities that make for vital energy, and wrong morality in preferring those that make for its decay.

So far there is nothing in this philosophy incompatible with the assumption that great individualities are the highest products of nature, and their production the worthiest objects of human endeavor. Of course, it always remains open for Socrates, Plato, the present reviewer, or any other wretched decadent, to ask why we should scorn delights and live laborious days in order to promote the evolution of some future Cæsar Borgia. Supposing, however, that we accept the transvaluation of all values to that extent, a remorseless logic will impel us to go further, and make a united Italy, which was Borgia's own ambition, or a united Europe, which, according to Nietzsche, was Napoleon's ambition, or finally, a united world, the object of our activity. I can quite imagine and sympathize with a valuation that counts human personality as the supreme thing, that says with Heraclitus, "one man is worth ten thousand if he be the best." Only Nietzsche bars himself out from that valuation by his repeated assurances that personality is an illusion (see, among other passages, *W. z. M.*, p. 369). And it was by no freak of paradox that he took up this position. It was an essential part of his anti-theistic polemic. According to him the ascription of phenomena to a personal cause arises from the fallacious grammatical abstraction of subject and predicate, noun and verb. There is really no such break in the continuous stream of becoming. Furthermore, gregarious and Christian moralists, in their vindictive hostility to the rich and powerful, have coined the false notion of personal responsibility, on the strength of which their op-

pressors were to be visited with everlasting punishment (*WW.*, pp. 337 *seq.*).

If I may borrow an illustration from Schopenhauer, Nietzsche is like the magician who sent his familiar spirit to draw water, but knew no spell that could stop him, with the result that he and the whole country were drowned. Our modern Calicles has reformed himself, discarding the brutal licentiousness of his prototype, and even adopting the passwords of Plato's *Republic*. But it is all in vain. The terrible Socratic dialectic works on and on to his utter and overwhelming confusion. He appeals to Power, and to Power let him go. He invokes a superman, and will find him in the modern state; that state so decried by Zarathustra as the stronghold of the weak and defenseless. "By value is to be understood the conditions under which complex vital structures are maintained and exalted" (*Leben*, p. 790). So says morality also; but above the individual, however gifted, she places the state, and above the state a universal society whose object is the greatest good of all its members; a good which for purposes of convenience may be variously expressed in terms of pleasure, of life, of health or of power, but in which the good of the parts ultimately coincides and identifies itself with the good of the whole.

I think something of this had begun to dawn on the noble spirit, to whom I have tried to be more just than he was to my teachers, before it went down under the waves of insanity. For among his later utterances this passage occurs: "In the whole process I find living morality, impelling force. It was an illusion to suppose I had transcended good and evil. Freethinking itself was a moral action, as honesty, as valor, as justice and as love" (*WW.*, XIV, p. 312).

ALFRED W. BENN.

FLORENCE, ITALY.